



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Homily by Father Christopher Comerford
July 23, 2017 Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading I Wisdom 12: 13, 16-19

Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16

Reading II Romans 8:27-27

Gospel Mathew 13:24-43

Homily

The three parables in today's Gospel are common ordinary stories that people would understand to reveal some of the mystery of the Kingdom of God. We know that the kingdom begins here on earth, and Jesus wants us to understand the several aspects of that teaching in the way we are called to be members of his kingdom.

We see in the first story the parable of the weeds and the wheat. They look very similar when they are growing up together. That can often happen. But with this weed, darnel was the name of it, it wraps around the roots and it is difficult to separate the roots of the darnel weed from the roots of the wheat. So you can lose your crop if you try and separate them. And that can happen when wheat and a plant look very similar.

I had an experience of this around my house at my previous parish. There were people who took care of the yard because I didn't have time to do it. Most of the time I let the yard alone but this one time I thought the weeds looked kind of tall and I thought they had not gotten to them in a while. So I pulled them out. They weren't weeds. They were flowering plants that hadn't bloomed yet. "Don't you like those flowers," someone asked.

"Oops!" So, I learned to keep away from the weeding. I can understand how these things get mixed up, and in this case it was clearly showing that good and evil were there together. And that is why we often say to God, "Why don't you just get rid of all the evil people?" Everything would be easier. But it is hard to tell sometimes, the good and evil that is there in the church and the world. And we always hope for conversion and that is why God is wisdom himself and says, "Let me be the one who ultimately decides this."

And this is a good reminder for us to be patient. Because there is always going to be good and evil. We only see the good when we look at and other people and that allows us to see the good taking place. But ultimately this describes our own hearts. There is both good and evil within us. And we hope that God is not going to eliminate us for the evil we have done, and we trust that he is not. We trust that God is full of love and compassion.

The book of Wisdom tells us that even though God is powerful, he can do all of these things. He chooses to work through us. He chooses to love us who are being evil. What a great example he sets for us. So we pray to be the good, not the evil. We pray to be transformed. We pray for patience when we come in contact with people who are living in ways with the evil one, that we can pray to God to have a change of heart.

Then we hear about the small things that can make a big difference. The mustard seed, close to being one of the smallest seeds possible grows into a big bush. Even though things can start very small — great things can happen. We have seen that so many times in the world. We have seen great things accomplished by one person and the difference that person can make.

I read some reflections lately about Eunice Kennedy Shiver who saw the need for those children and adults with special needs. She saw how there were not enough activities for them to participate in. So what did she do? She had a special event in her back yard for those with special needs, and later it was transformed into the Special Olympics. Next year will be the 50th Anniversary and now the Special Olympic is world wide because of the dream and vision of one woman.

Another example is St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta. She didn't go out to found an order around the world to care for the poor. She went to Calcutta, India, to do it herself. She could see Christ in the distressing disguise of the poor. And just by going to take care of the dying and those who were poor and ill, look at it now and the difference her Order makes around the entire world. It is incredible the difference one person can make that begins with a tiny beginning and a tiny seed, and out of that someone can accomplish great things. There are many stories that can be told about this.

You may say, "I am not Mother Teresa, I am not Eunice Shriver." But we can do the things we are called to do, and the things that we are inspired to do. They are different for each person. If you use the gifts and talents entrusted to you, and to me, we can see how God is moving us with a passion within our own hearts, and take on those good things that can be accomplished. It doesn't have to be a big thing, because great things can start from small things. Mother Teresa said it best, "You don't have to do great things. Just do small things with great love." Just do small things with great love. Each and everything we do will be great if it is done for the glory of God.

The story of the yeast in the bread. Three measures of wheat-flour-yeast were enough to make bread for 60 people. That's a lot of bread isn't it. From one little bit of yeast it can make the dough rise to make a difference. Sometimes we are called to be that yeast, even if things are already in existence just to help build things up is important. We have so many roles we can do in our family, in our society, in our workplace, in our parish. Each person is important. We can pray to use these gifts and talents God has given us for his glory. It builds up a kingdom. It often starts small and can form into the biggest branch and biggest bush we can have. Let's pray to have the courage to do what God is asking us to do. Let's open our hearts to make a difference in his kingdom: small things, but important things with great love.

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